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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 000157

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/MUSTAFA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/13/2016

TAGS: PREL PGOV KWBG PBTS IS KPAL KDEM

SUBJECT: PALESTINIAN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS SITREP
#6: JANUARY 13, 2006: JERUSALEM CANDIDATES DEMAND THAT
ELECTIONS BE HELD ON TIME; SHOTS FIRED AT NASSER YUSIF'S
RAMALLAH RESIDENCE

REF: JERUSALEM 00139

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

Hamas, Independent Candidates Issue
Statement on Jerusalem Voting

11. (C) PLO Chief Negotiator Sa'eb Erekat January 12 provided the Consul General a one-page statement endorsed by 19 of the 39 Jerusalem PLC candidates. The statement, which includes the signatures of four Hamas candidates, urges that elections be held as scheduled regardless of any potential Israeli interference. The statement also calls on the US and EU to increase their efforts to ensure a free and fair election. (Note: The first four signatories of the document are from Hamas, suggesting that Hamas composed the document. The signature of Fatah national slate candidate Jihad Abu Zneid and two Fatah independent candidates also appear on the document. End note.)

12. (SBU) The following is an unofficial translation of the January 11 statement:

Begin text:

A statement released by candidates of Jerusalem district.

On Wednesday January 11, the PLC candidates in the district of Jerusalem have come together to examine the procedures as were released by the Central Elections Commission (Jerusalem Branch), on the management of election campaigning in Jerusalem. The signers agreed on the following:

1 -- The candidates (signatories of this petition) would like to stress that the second Palestinian PLC election is an internal Palestinian affair. No foreign body has the right to interfere in it.

2 -- The candidates would like to stress that elections must be held as scheduled on January 25, 2006. The elections must not be delayed for whatever reason and no matter the Israeli obstructions.

3 -- The candidates highly value the supportive position of the international community to conduct free and fair elections.

4 -- The candidates request the international community, particularly the EU and the US, to increase their initiatives meant to conduct free and fair elections. The candidates demand that all offices of civil society organizations, UN

headquarters, and other international organizations be made available to the disposal of the Palestinian Central Elections Commission.

5 -- The candidates demand that Palestinian citizens in Jerusalem be allowed to vote while presenting their identity cards (in lieu of prior registration). The candidates also demand that Israeli authorities must not harass citizens on Elections Day.

6 -- Candidates request the international community and all freedom and democracy-loving bodies to render the Palestinian elections as a successful endeavor.

7 -- Candidates condemn the Israeli measures of summoning and questioning of candidates and supporters, some of whom have been arrested.

8 -- Candidates demand the cancellation of all Israeli prosecution measures that have been taken or will be taken on grounds of the Palestinian elections in the city of Jerusalem.

9 -- Candidates urge all Jerusalem residents to head to the polling stations wherever they will be located.

Signatories:

Dr. Ibrahim Abu Salem (Change and Reform)
Mohammed Toutah (Change and Reform)
Ahmad Atoun (Change and Reform)
Wael Husseini (Change and Reform)
Dr. Talal Abu Afifa (Fatah Independent candidate)
Iyad Salaymeh (Independent)
Hana Siniora (Independent)
Fadwa Khader (Independent)
Asad Ghazawneh (Independent)

Majed Aloush (Independent)
Mitri Nasrawi (Independent)
Hatem Abbas (Fatah Independent candidate)
Ziad Abu Zayyad (Independent)
Younis Jafar (Independent)
Hani Isawi (Independent)
Abdel Latif Ghaith (Independent)
Yacoub Ghaith (Independent)
Simon Awad (Independent)
Jihad Abu Zneid (Candidate on Fatah national list)

Unrest in Ramallah

¶3. (C) Unidentified gunmen the evening of January 12 reportedly fired gunshots at the al-Bireh residence of PA Minister of Interior Nasser Yusif. PA police guarding the residence returned fire, causing the driver of a passing vehicle to crash, injuring two passengers. The police arrested two individuals from the vehicle, on suspicion that they were the suspected shooters. Following the arrest, scores of Fatah activists took to the streets of al-Bireh, where they blocked traffic, burned tires, and demanded the release of the two suspects. The activists charged that the two men in custody were not involved in the shooting. (Note: This may be correct, since a similar shooting took place at the Council of Ministers by speeding car immediately following the incident at Yusif's residence. No injuries were reported. According to an official from the Preventive Security Organization, initial findings from the interrogation of the two suspects indicated that the actual gunmen who shot at Yusif's residence had managed to flee the scene. End note.) PA security officials suggested that the motive behind the shootings was linked to opposition within Fatah to holding PLC elections on January 25.

¶4. (C) In a separate incident in Tulkarm, unknown gunmen fired shots at the vehicle of Samir Hilal, the campaign coordinator for Salam Fayyad's "Third Way" national list. There were no reported injuries. Sources in the "Third Way" have reported several incidents of harassment, including the January 10 flyer denouncing Fayyad as a US agent (reftel).

¶5. (C) Hamas officials in Tulkarm January 12 charged that eleven activists arrested in the early morning hours during an Israeli arrest operation were engaged in official campaigning for the Hamas slate, "Change and Reform". The Hamas officials said that the Israeli round-up was blatant interference in internal Palestinian affairs.

WALLES